WORLD CHRONICLE

UNITED NATIONS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DURATION: 28'00" TRANSCRIPT AS BROADCAST

PROGRAMME: **"WORLD CHRONICLE"**

GUEST: Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director
UN Population Fund

JOURNALIST: Bhaskar Menon, PTI-TV, India
Sanaa Youssef, Al-Akhbar, Cairo
Judy Lessing, Radio New Zealand

SYNOPSIS

U.N. POPULATION FUND'S 1991 REPORT

The United Nations Population Fund's 1991 Report focuses on family planning, particularly in developing countries. Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the Fund, highlights the importance of economic and social development as a key to successful family planning programmes. She estimates that nine billion dollars by the year 2000 would be needed to achieve a balanced population growth.

"WORLD CHRONICLE" is produced by the Information Products Division Department of Public Information, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017. U.S.A.

Executive Producer: Kamil Taha
Director: Livingston Hinckley
Production Assistant: Eloisa Ugalde

Programme No. 433 Recorded on 30 April 1991

VOICE From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues. Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns and this is **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

World population has exceeded five billion people. The unprecedented increase in our planet's human population will undoubtedly have far-reaching international, political and economic implications, especially for developing countries. In its 1991 Report on the State of World Population, the United Nations Population Fund, UNFPA, focuses on family planning.

Our guest today, Dr. Nafis Sadik, is the Executive Director of the Fund. A national of Pakistan, Dr. Sadik will be interviewed here at United Nations headquarters in New York by: Bhaskar Menon of PTI-TV of India; Sanaa Youssef of Al-Akhbar of Cairo; and Judy Lessing of Radio New Zealand.

Before we begin our discussion, let's look at an aspect of one country's efforts to introduce a population policy.

Our correspondent Steve Whitehouse reports:

> "It's a big day for the Yawahasan family. Soomoh receives her award as Model Mother of the Year. The Government of Thailand sponsors the award to heighten community involvement in its population programme.
>
> The Yawahasans have two daughters, aged thirteen and five. They have decided not to have any more children. Kabainon, the father, explains:

"If one has less children, quality of family life is better".

The family lives in Narathiwat, a predominantly Muslim province in southern Thailand. With more than half a million population, its birth rate remains a third higher than the rest of the country.

For political and cultural reasons, family planning sponsored by the central government in Bangkok, which is largely Buddhist, has been viewed warily in this Muslim province. Dr. Yutthana Sinlaparatsami, head of the Provincial Health Office explains:

"When the Government launched the project of family planning, they think that the government wants to reduce the population - so there's a lot of resistance on this".

With financial support from the United Nations Population Fund, a maternal and child care project tailored to the sensitivities of the region was launched. It stresses birth spacing for the health of mothers and children.

A corps of health workers and birth attendants work for the project. Mrs. Suaidah is a midwife. She says spacing of children is especially important for poor families.

"It is better to space the children. It is beneficial for the mother's health. She will have time to adjust before she has another one".

READEX FICHE

Mrs. Suaidad makes follow-up visits to homes. Birth spacing advice is included in the service.

The region is economically depressed, relying on rubber, coconut and fish. Local businessman, Son Sangshoot, has voluntarily turned his store into a health centre.

A continuing campaign promotes better child care and birth spacing. Visits to villages are preceded by publicity to interest families, especially those with young children.

Health workers explain and demonstrate the range of services available. The visits have something of the atmosphere of a fair, where families may find many forms of health care as well as family planning services.

With the help of the UN Population Fund, Thailand is carrying out a population policy which respects the sensitivities of its ethnic and religious minorities".

LITTLEJOHNS: Dr. Sadik, the narrator has just referred to the problem of ethnic and religious minorities. Is this the main hang-up in getting family planning to work in developing countries?

SADIK: No, I wouldn't say that that's the main hang-up because family planning programmes have succeeded in all kinds of ethnic, religious and political situations. For example, in Muslim countries like Indonesia and Tunisia, our programme has been relatively successful. In many Catholic countries as well, it's has been successful. One of the

principal problems has been, in the past, the lack of political commitment and political support for the programme and then this demonstrates itself also by the lack of support at different levels in the society. If I have to single out any one factor, I would single out that one factor as one of the principal stumbling blocks to launching the programme. Now to getting it accepted widely at the level and the rate at which we would like it to be effective, we have to then consider several other factors and the most important of those being the status and the rôle of women in that particular society.

LITTLEJOHNS: You mentioned the political obstacles. In the United States, for example, I gather that there's a certain reluctance to support family planning and, of course, there's this problem of abortion and the charge which, I think, you have rejected that UNFPA is somehow rather supporting abortion programmes. This is not true?

SADIK: This is absolutely not true. UNFPA does not and has not supported abortion programmes anywhere in the world for several reasons, one of them being that several developing countries are also opposed to abortion and we have enough sensitivity in our acceptance of family planning without sort of promoting abortion as a method and in any event the point that we make is that in most of the developing countries, the first thing is to provide contraceptive services because that is the way to eliminate abortion. As you may know, and I think it's even mentioned in this report somewhere, that still today there are about 40 to 50 million illegal abortions around the world and wherever you have abortions - and this is in the United States as in many developing countries - it's an indication that family planning services have failed or that that woman does not want that pregnancy which means that there is a demand for prevention of that pregnancy. So our point is

you must provide good, effective and accessible family planning services in the way in which the people accept them and can utilize them if you are really against abortion.

LITTLEJOHNS: But UNFPA is not opposed to abortion, per se?

SADIK: But we don't support, we don't have a view. I mean we may have individual and personal view but as far as supporting abortion for family planning, we do not do that. At this moment that's the policy that we are following, endorsed by our Governing Council as well as by the Mexico Conference.

MENON: Dr. Sadik, your State of the World Population Report this year looks at the costs of reaching a number of targets in family planning of population policy and compares them to the cost of not reaching those targets. Could you tell us something about what these targets are?

SADIK: One of the targets that we have indicated is that we need to get the expenditure for family planning to 9 billion dollars by the year 2000 which means the doubling of the levels of expenditure between 1990 and the year 2000 from the present level of 4 and half billion dollars, and of this amount about 3 and half billion dollars has to come from international assistance. One billion will come from users' fees and the rest will come from national governments themselves. We don't have a lot of studies on how much it costs to bring up children because in many societies, you know, it's not easy to document but, for example, from your own country, India, we have some figures. It costs, for example, 7,000 dollars in a country like India to bring up a child from infancy to the time that he or she enters the labour market and therefore the cost of preventing, let's say, 200 million births or whatever, would be multiplied by seven thousand dollars. It's quite a considerable figure and if

we say that the average amount is not 7,000, let's say, for all the countries that it is somewhat lower - but India is not one of the richest countries in the world - let's say it's 5,000 dollars, then preventing 100 million births is that much money is saved. So per capita expenditure though I'm not even sure that is the way to measure it because you must also measure the cost in human misery, in human suffering, in human wastage. That's something that is not considered at all and in terms of human wastage, you think about the millions of people that are brought in to the world, but they don't have health, they don't have education, they don't therefore, have access to unemployment, their potential is, so to speak, not developed.

MENON: So you haven't quantified the cost of not spending this money?

SADIK: To some extent we are trying to do that, but we believe that it would be 20 or 30 times the amount of investment that you make. We have some figures, but you know, because they're so unreliable, we have not really used them in the Report.

YOUSSEF: Dr. Sadik, you mentioned in your Report that most of the money for your programmes will come from developing countries. How could such a burden be put on the shoulder of developing countries with all that financial problems they are facing? Is there a way that the Fund would go around and try to convince rich countries to give a hand to solve such an important area?

SADIK: We are estimating, as I said, nine billion dollars by the year 2000. Today the expenditure on family planning programmes is only about a billion and a half dollars from external resources so what we are saying, in fact, is

almost a tripling of international support. And the reason why we are not increasing the contributions from developing countries that much is because a large number of the countries that are now coming into the family planning programme are from Sub-Saharan Africa - countries, by definition, the least equipped to pay for the additional cost so I think the figures, perhaps they are not so clear but the doubling is not all from developing countries because today already developing countries like India, China, Brazil, Mexico, Thailand, Indonesia, they are spending most of their own resources. Ninety percent of the programme resources in China come from Chinese themselves. Almost the same figure is for India, Indonesia - something like eighty percent of the resources are national - similarly in Brazil as well as in Mexico and so on. So all these large countries are spending their own money and that's what constitutes the majority of the national resources. Thailand is another case in point so the increase in resources we're trying to get is a large amount from developed countries and plus some increase in users' fees because that's not something that we have done enough of even in these countries like Mexico, India, China and so on. Even China is experimenting with users' fees and so that would be another source of income.

LESSING: I would like to go back to something that you said earlier in response to Michael's first question. You talked about the status of women now. Somewhere in the Report there's a figure that says: "Of all the children who are not in school, in some form of school in the world, sixty percent are girls". Well, it seems to me that part of your job is outside of your particular job description. How do you address things like that? How do you deal with that?

SADIK: As you may also note that in the recommendations, we put a certain amount of stress on social development and social sectors and the point that we are making that investment in women is a key to success of family planning programmes and perhaps also of development programmes. So we have taken upon ourselves several ways of promoting this. One is just a straight advocacy. You know, we speak about this in all UN fora with governments and so on. Our attempt is to try to make this happen through the existing normal channels. Secondly, that we ourselves finance programmes and projects which are integrated, which include, for example, literacy for women, income-generating vocational training for women, credit opportunities for women together with the maternal, child health and family planning programmes but by definition they have to be limited in scope because our funds are quite limited so we do this in a sort of a demonstration wave or in a demonstration project for countries and try to help them to see that this way they would get more of a return for their investment in the population programme. I've also now got some allies in the UN system in this because there is now an increasing recognition that perhaps economic development lies not just by straight economic investments but also will come from social investments, so the World Bank and the UNDP and the UNDP's own report, The Human Development Report, are putting much more emphasis and focus on social development and the relationship between the levels of social development and several social development indicators like literacy for women, access to health and I'm also trying to promote access to family planning as one of the indicators and its linkages to economic progress and I think east Asian countries have certainly demonstrated that education of girls and women and participation of women in economic activities seems to have a direct relation to their economic growth. So I don't think it's so easy for us to do; it requires a lot of effort on the part of all of us in the UNFPA unless we get

everybody else to understand that it is extremely important to do more in trying to promote the participation and the rôle of women as an end in itself because you are really wasting half of the population in the country and secondly, and in a sense to get their development goals and objectives achieved. I must say that I've also have some amount of success through involving women leaders, women organizations. It's like they get a UN umbrella under which they can then organize themselves at the country level and speak. I believe that we've done well in a few countries just with the women's organizations and they have sort of taken up the cause of family planning as a right for women and also the cause of women's access to credit and everything else in several countries. We have some projects in Egypt, we have some projects in Jordan, Indonesia, we have an extremely successful programme with women's involvement which is now going to be financed by commercial banks.

LITTLEJOHNS: The programme is **WORLD CHRONICLE**. Our guest is Dr. Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the UN Population Fund. Dr. Sadik, you spoke very eloquently about women. What are the prospects for a male pill?

SADIK: I don't think that there are in the near future any prospects for a male pill. There is a lot of research going on. We ourselves are financing the WHO Human Reproduction Programme and some studies but there many are physiological problems but also you have to overcome a lot of psychological barriers to male contraception.

LITTLEJOHNS: More so than with women? Why is that?

SADIK: Because in the end women don't bear the consequences of pregnancy and it seems like men are not willing - from the experiments, from the testing of some of technology that's being developed.

LITTLEJOHNS: They are afraid of sterility? Of impotence?

SADIK: Right, of many other things. There are a lot of hypothetical or maybe real fears but they have a lot more fears and males biologically are just not prepared to accept any discomfort. And it goes with the status that males have been given in society. I don't want to be confrontational but the whole relationship, male/female, has evolved over thousands of years and some aspects of this others are the fear that nothing must somehow influence or affect their physical well-being.

MENON: In looking at the whole problem of population policy one of the wisdoms that has dawned on the international community is that development is far more effective than birth control policies but if you just have a birth control policy without development, it doesn't work. Do you think that the nine billion dollars that you target for the year 2000 might be better spent, say, in educating women entirely?

SADIK: First of all, I must disagree with you that the wisdom that has dawned on the international community is that development is going to take care of birth rates. I don't think that's the wisdom. In fact, the wisdom that has dawned on them is that you must address population issues as part of your development strategy; that it is an integral part. When you develop or when you announce you have a development goal, it's for some number of people. So you have to look at the denominator as well and you must also look at how this denominator is going to increase or decrease or how it's going to be distributed and there are also ways of influencing this. So I think the recognition that has been reached by the developing community is that population must figure in all development strategies.

MENON: Quite true, but I think it is also true that a population policy in isolation has never worked.

SADIK: Right, but therefore I don't think that what is now understood is that population policy is not a substitute for development but it is a part of a development policy. Therefore, a development policy is not going to succeed unless you take population as one of the elements of your policy. So that is the recognition that this must be part of their overall development strategy, then you must look at what the goals are because the goals are sort of somehow fuzzed. All development plans start with this very pious statement that this plan is intended to improve the levels of living of the people and their well-being and so on. And then what does it go on to say? All these industries and this or that investment. It doesn't say a word about the people and how are they going to benefit. So you get GNP measures as the measure of development. You don't say how that GNP was used to improve the lot of people and, in fact, the lot of people in Africa, even to some extent in south Asia has gone backwards. Health services don't reach them, educational services don't reach them and certainly women have not benefited because, let's say, your own country India, after what years of independence, we have only 40 percent of women who are literate - 60 percent don't know how to read and write. So several generations have gone by and they still don't know how to read and write. I'll take my own case, my own country, Pakistan, social development is so low.

MENON: But first my question. Would the money be better spent in educating the women?

SADIK: You have to look at the whole development. Family planning has to be part of the strategy because otherwise you are not going to liberate women, you are not going to give them their health, their needs are not taken care of and all the strategies to increase child survival and so on will also not work unless you have it integrated with birth spacing and so on. I think my answer to that is no. The best investments in a development strategy are family planning or population policies, particularly education for girls and health service but a health service which is a preventive health service not spending all the money on hospitals and curative services for a few because those really take up a lot of money and then you must reduce all your military expenditures and if you are looking at expenditures, you must look at what are the wasteful expenditures that don't do anything for people. And you must then make your priorities. So my priorities would not be to take this and put family planning in. I would take money from somewhere else and put in it family planning and in education and in health.

YOUSSEF: Dr. Sadik, you mentioned at the beginning of your introduction that the lack of political support is a main stumbling block for family planning programmes. What's the reason behind that? Do you need to educate political leaders? What do you have to do?

SADIK: I think the reason political leaders often are reluctant to support family planning and population programmes is that they believe that this is sensitive and it may not get them enough votes. Some of them really don't think it's very important. Some, of course, think it's important but are not sure really that it's going to do as much as it's supposed to do and besides also many of them look at this as

sort of the problems of women. I've heard many leaders say, "that's not our problem, women should deal with that kind of thing". So certainly they need to be educated and I think education is happening. There's quite a change in attitudes of political leaders. It may be in their personal attitudes but it doesn't always seem to filter down then to all levels in their governments and in their administration. And secondly, it doesn't always result in any infusion of resources, both human and financial. For example, even if a political leadership recognizes that it is very important, they may put the most weak Minister in charge of the programme. I'm just giving that as an illustration. The civil servants to the government usually look at this as a punishment. So the countries where the programmes have succeeded, they have been given very high priority like in Thailand, or in Indonesia or in Malaysia. They have very high priority to the programme. So the civil servants and the politicians think it's important to show achievement because that's desired both by the political leadership also then eventually by the population because the programmes then are presented in a way that the population accepts that programme.

LESSING: Well, then what about having more women in politics?

SADIK: Oh, I don't know how you can succeed in doing that. Certainly, that would help a lot. Surprisingly, even in the family planning programme there are not that many women leaders of the programme - women directors of the programmes. There seems to be so many more programmes that are directed by men. But in the UNFPA we are trying to do more in trying to get women involved in our programme planning, in our programme strategy, in our programme implementation. Sometimes it is not easy to identify a woman manager for a programme but if you

really set your mind to it, you can do it. We are increasing at least within the programme a lot more sort of involvement and participation of women.

LITTLEJOHNS: Dr. Sadik, I'm afraid, that's all the time we have. Thank you for joining us on this edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

Our guest has been Nafis Sadik, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund. She was interviewed here at United Nations headquarters in New York by: Bhaskar Menon of PTI-TV of India, Sanaa Youssef of Al-Akhbar of Cairo; and Judy Lessing of Radio New Zealand.

I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **WORLD CHRONICLE**.

****

Transcripts of the programme may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to: **WORLD CHRONICLE**, United Nations, Room S-827, New York, New York 10017, USA.

WORLD CHRONICLE is broadcast worldwide and features guests whose work is concerned with major global issues. This programme is a public affairs presentation of this station from United Nations Radio and Television.

Additional information material about the United Nations can be obtained by writing to the Public Inquiries Unit, United Nations, Room GA-57, New York, New York, 10017, USA or the UN Information Centre in your country.